Turning Camp Upton Into a Soldier University

By Louis Lee Arms

THE work being done by the United States Army Recruit Educational Center is summed up eloquently by the following letter:

"Camp Upton, New York,
"September 4, 1919.

"Dear Sir:

"I was born April 12, 1898, in Slowvience, Russia, State of Grodnoweleg. I was twenty-one years old when I left my country and came to the United States of America. I arrived here March 13, 1913, so I have been in this country six years. I have been occupied as a day laborer. Not understanding English, I couldn't secure a good job. I joined the army May 29, 1919, and am learning to read and write very well. Before I came into the army I couldn't write my own name. Now I am an American soldier and stand for the United States of America. After I am discharged from the army I will be able to get a better position as well as being a citizen of the United States.

"Sincerely,
"JOE SHESTAK.

"Co. B, Recruit Educational Center."

The improved estate of young Private Shestak has been made possible by the development of a new idea in the United States army, an idea at once sweeping and revolutionary, and strange to the man who has known our army as an organization of hide-bound tendencies and crimson-taped standpatism.

In brief, the army is willing to undertake the proposition of Americanizing America. In a small way, now, it is doing that. If affirmative legislation is passed—and there is reason to believe it will be—the idea will bloom into radiant flower, finding root here and there across the United States and making Americans of all those who live in America.

The draft showed there was plenty of elbowroom for such work. Of the 4,000,000 men who were called into service precisely 24.9 per cent were debarred from active service because of illiteracy. That means that a total of 1,000,000 men could not read an English printed newspaper or write a letter in our mother language. Thus, of 100 men recruited who successfully passed physical requirements only 75 could be counted upon for potential service.

The census of 1909 brought to light the fact that there were at that time 9,000,000 illiterates in the United States. That number is said to have increased by several millions. Our basic industries secure their man power from abroad in such majorities as are indicated by 58 per cent in the iron and steel trade, 61 per cent in meat packing, 79 per cent in cotton goods, 72 per cent in clothing, 67 per cent in leather, 67 per cent in oil refining and 65 per cent in sugar.

Prey to the "Red"

Under such conditions, is it surprising that these illiterates and semi-illiterates are ready prey to destructive radicalism? Where can the backroom demagogue find blind tools so readily as among these men who, lacking education and understanding, are not able to think for themselves? Are not education and the sense of Americanism the surest cure for the spread of fallacious theory?

Brigadier General William J. Nicholson, commanding officer at Upton, who saw service in France and during the Spanish-American War, a fine, upstanding, handsome American soldier, believes that the answers to all these questions are to be found in the Recruit Educational Center plan.

"If a man actually desired to be thrown out of a window," said General Nicholson, "I know of no surer way by which he might accomplish his ends than to walk in on these young men we are here teaching Americanism and speak favorably of the Bolshevists. We are breeding Americanism here—Americanism that cannot be debauched by casuistry and Americanism that will never remain passive in a national emergency.

"Consider that we have to educate men who represent forty-four different nationalities, ranging from the Persian to the Greek, from the South American to the Irish, all of them illiterate, all of them economically handicapped in the industrial system of the United States, all of them young and physically able to give service to their adopted country, yet denied this privilege through an antiquated legislative provision that has outgrown its usefulness. At least, we hope to prove, and think we are proving, that this provision not only is dispensable but actually deleterious.

"The men of these forty-four different nations were attracted to the United States by various reasons. Arriving here, each of them was definitely a handicap to himself and to his newly adopted country. If he had in him the right kind of timber his failure to read and write English was a deterrent to his progress, and, in addition, statistics in mining and other hazardous occupations show that the percentage of accidents among illiterates is far greater than among other workmen. This man probably associated with his kind, and, neither speaking nor reading English, nor learning any of the history or traditions of the country in which he was occupied, is it not altogether reasonable to believe that he could be enlisted among the large, dissatisfied radical element?

"We firmly believe that education can remedy a great many economic and industrial ills; and our experience here is proving that it is so easy to teach illiterates, to give them, in addition, some appreciation of the country they have chosen to live in, to get from them a reciprocal service that is valuable both to this country and themselves, that to forego this opportunity longer would be inexcusable negligence."

Upton University!

That is much of the preaching that is being practiced at Camp Upton. Camp Upton is no longer a seething pot of military activity. The military still is there, but, in addition, there is the aspect of the university, with books and classes, recitations and examinations. Phonetics, reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, civics and American history are among the subjects that are pursued by bright-eyed, eager young men who have undertaken their education with a full sense of their individual responsibilities.

The abstract of nationalities in the Recruit Educational Center last Monday showed the following countries represented and the number of illiterates now in training: America, 262; Algiers, 1; Argentina, 1; Armenia, 4; Austria, 42; Albania, 2; Bulgaria, 2; Brazil, 4; Canada, 14; Chile, 4; Central America, 2; France, 10; Cuba, 1; Denmark, 7; Belgium, 3; Ecuador, 1; England, 1; Greece, 21; Holland, 6; Hungary, 5; Honduras, 1; Ireland, 1; Italy, 83; Lithuania, 6; Mexico, 11; Morocco, 1; Norway, 2; Panama, 1; Persia, 2; Poland, 24; Porto Rico, 20; Portugal, 4; Rumania, 1; Russia, 64; Spain, 15; Sweden, 2; Slovakia, 3; Syria, 1; Serbia, 3; Turkey, 3; Transylvania, 1; Uruguay, 1, and Venezuela, 1.

That list fairly tells a story of the scope of work that has been undertaken by the United States army under the emergency act and which will be continued on a far broader scale if the bill introduced into the Senate by Mr. Chamberlain, as an offset to the "Act to Regulate Enlistments in the Army of the United States," approved August 1, 1894, which stipulates that "in time of peace no person (except an Indian) who cannot speak, read and write the English language" shall be eligible to join the United States army, is passed. Senator Chamberlain's bill also will be introduced in the House by Representative Kahn.

It is important that Congress act favorably on this measure or the Recruit Educational Center plan which has been developing so prosperously at Camp Upton will arrive at an automatic death.

Seeing Is Believing

If Congress in a body could visit Camp Upton and perceive the work that has been carried on by Major John H. Burns and his staff it is probable that the feasibility of this plan, which is the outgrowth of the battalion development idea that was utilized in the war against Germany and which has attained a scope beyond the hope of its founders, would be brought home more effectively than the printed word can do it. In six months the development battalions handled over 25,000 illiterate soldiers. It was conclusively proved that such men could be readily trained into good soldiers almost as quickly as men who understand English, by coupling a course in English with military instruction.

The work of teaching is divided into eight grades. The men at Camp Upton are given three hours of instruction every day, with the exception of Saturday afternoons, Sundays and holidays. The following chart shows the system of instruction:

Grade 1—Letter formation and sound value. Word construction. Phonetic drill with simple sentences.

Grade 2—Phonetic drill. Reading simple sentences. Simple spelling. Writing simple sentences from board.

Grade 3—Phonetic drill. Reading simple sentences. Spelling. Writing simple sentences from dictation.

Grade 4—Phonetic drill. Reading. Spelling. Writing sentences from dictation. Numbers.

Grade 5—Reading. Spelling. Writing from dictation. Arithmetic. Geography.

Grade 6—Reading. Spelling. Writing. Composition. Arithmetic. Geography.

Grade 7—Reading. Spelling. Writing. Composition. Arithmetic. Civics. Geography.

Grade 8—Reading. Spelling. Writing. Composition. Arithmetic. Civics. History.

A visit to the classrooms showed an encouraging industry. The instructors say these men are eager to learn and are keenly disappointed when they do not master each lesson.

"Tell these men," said General Nicholson, "that there will be only bread and water for supper and there will not be a murmur. But tell them that their classes have been called off for one day and they will be almost openly in revolt."

One instructor declared that his experience showed that often the men with the most unintelligent appearing faces had the brightest minds. "Imagine," said he, "the double handicap such men suffer through illiteracy."

The "Show Unit"

The "Americans all" detachment is the "show unit" at Camp Upton, and, in the words of one admirer, "West Point never developed a more military looking lot of soldiers."

This detachment recently toured the Middle West and the East as a demonstration of the work being done by the Recruit Educational plan. They were applauded everywhere, and their "cadence drill," which serves the double purpose of teaching both English and drill, is one of the prettiest bits of educational training fostered by the Colonel Bernard Lentz plan. It was Colonel Bernard Lentz, of the General Staff, by the way, who mapped out and organized the Recruit Educational scheme.

In this small detachment fourteen nationalities are represented, as follows: Spanish, Lithuanian, Italian, French-Canadian, Norwegian, Finnish, French, Polish, Russian, Armenian, Greek, Dutch, Jugo-Slavish, Danish and American. All of the men formerly were illiterates.

On the drill field at Camp Upton one day last week they bawled out their own orders in acceptable English, "counted off" perfectly, and, with the customary military flourish and after an admirable drill, formed in a semicircle and sang "America" and a popular song, sounding the words more clearly than the average music hall singer. In the singing they were led by Pedro Arnez and in the drill by Lieutenant Fritz Weld, an impressive drillmaster.

"Let freedom ring" was the phrase flung loudest to the whipping winds of Long Island, and as these fourteen men concluded "America" the air seemed filled with a new and vibrant Americanism, for surely here was Americanism where none formerly had been asked or expected.

The officer personnel in charge of the Recruit Educational plan includes Colonel Bernard Lentz, its founder; Major John J. Burns, commanding officer and formerly the director of vocational training at Chattanooga; Captain A. C. Heeter, adjutant, in active charge of the vocational training that is being carried on at Camp Upton in addition to the Recruit Educational plan. Lieutenant B. P. Currier, for fifteen years a pedagogue and the man who arranged and has charge of the R. E. C. curriculum, and Major Samuel Stewart and Lieutenant W. H. Wells, who have charge of the information and publicity departments of the R. E. C.

"Always prepared" is the slogan of the Upton recruit school

Those Valiant K Troopers Who Are Rounding Up the Reds

By F. F. Van de Water

THIRTY of them came into New York City a week ago last night and, aided by detectives of the Bomb Squad, went through the many headquarters of the Community party like a typhoon, sweeping the meeting halls clean of all occupants and gathering during the course of their visitation several tons of literature tinged with anarchistic red.

Newspapers referred to them variously as "the Constabulary," "the State Police," "the Mounted," while radical journals went further afield and termed them "the Black Cossacks."

This last appellation is resented somewhat by Troop K of the New York State Troopers. In the first place, they point out that their uniforms are gray; in the second, they refer to their record as proof that their only similarity to Cossacks is that they and the former henchmen of the Czar ride horses on occasion.

It is not at the wish of the troopers or the desire of their superintendent, Major George Fletcher Chandler, that they have entered the city for the purpose of spreading dismay among the spreaders of revolutionary propaganda.

Strictly speaking, they are rural police—that and nothing more. From their barracks at Gedney Farms, on the outskirts of White Plains, they ride patrol through ten counties, doing efficiently and persistently the work that until their creation was performed in slipshod fashion by deputy sheriffs and town constables. From the beginning of the department, it has been Major Chandler's desire never to interfere with or intrude upon work in cities that could be done by the police departments of such communities.

But when New York State declared war on the "Red" menace, the Governor appointed Senator Lusk and his colleagues the general staff for the campaign, and then turned to the State Troopers as the most efficient and impartial body in the state to carry out the physical side of this warfare.

For this reason, Troop K, whose real sphere is the highways and byways of the rural districts, has thrice been called into the city—first to raid the headquarters of Ludwig C. A. K. Martens, Bolshevik representative here; then to search the Rand School of Social Science, and a week ago Saturday to execute the greatest round-up of "Reds" and near-"Reds" that has ever taken place here.

On each occasion the troopers have got what they started out for. That is the code of the department, and they have lived up to it. They have obeyed orders and no more, which is also part of the code. They have done more than that. In the three times they have launched offensives against radicalism here there is not one instance of brutality to be laid against them; not even a single beating up or manhandling. And provocation, at times, has been strong.

That also is part of the troopers' code and part of the dream of the perfect police that is Major Chandler's and is being made manifest through the department he commands—courtesy, consideration, tact, gentleness. These are strange virtues to be coupled with the get-your-man, fight-to-the-finish doctrine to which the riders also hold. But it has worked for two years—is still working.

When the average citizen read that the "constabulary" had rounded up a thousand suspected "Reds" here a week ago, ten chances to one he had no clear vision of what manner of men these were. If he visioned them at all, it was probably as the supermen that certain writers of quasi-fiction have made the Pennsylvania police. He pictured them a-horse, iron-faced and forbidding, armed and quick on the trigger—implacable representatives of implacable law.

Not the Right Picture

Unless he knew the troopers—and most New Yorkers don't—he didn't see the right picture at all. If he had, he would have imagined thirty or more young men in tight-waisted gray blouses, riding trousers of English cut, gray flannel shirts and gray campaign hats; purple ties and purple hat bands, cheerfully, and with no show of firearms whatever, herding putative "Reds" into waiting patrol wagons and riding with them, quite as cheerfully, to police headquarters.

Then, when the long night of examination was over, he would have seen them, with their slender, keen-faced captain, riding back to the big barracks at Gedney Farms, glad to be free of the city and back to their own again.

There you can find some of the breed any day in the big, white, broad-winged structure that was once the palatial stable of a millionaire and is now, thanks to the ability of the trooper to turn his hand to anything, a most serviceable and comfortable barracks, with room and to spare for fifty-eight men and horses, which constitute the full strength of the troop.

When Troop K arrived from the training camp at its new home, in the summer of 1917, the stable had stood vacant for six years, save for a week each year, when entries at the Westchester Horse Show were housed there. Stalls filled the space that was to be the barrack room. During some one of the winters of neglect the pipes had broken, and there was no running water. Walls were dirty, floors were filthy, partitions were splintered and seemingly held together only by cobwebs.

There was work for a dozen carpenters, as many plasterers and plumbers and a whole company of painters and scrubbers. Troop K asked for no outside help, but straightway turned to setting its house in order. There were days of banging and sawing, of splashing and scrubbing, but when the dust and spray cleared away the barracks were more than habitable: they were comfortable.

From this headquarters Captain J. A. Warner, a Harvard man, a former cavalry officer and a man who is in the service from sheer love of it, with his subordinate, Lieutenant Chrisman, conduct their part in the outpost warfare that the department is continually waging, with a total force of 232 men, against crime throughout the state.

Fifty-eight men in Troop K patrol Nassau and Suffolk counties, on Long Island; Westchester, Putnam and that part of Dutchess south of Poughkeepsie, on the east side of the Hudson, and Rockland, Orange, Sullivan and the southern half of Ulster on the west.

People laughed when it was proposed to attempt to police a terrain like this with so pitifully small a force. They pointed out that the Long Island counties lay far away—from two to five days' journey by horse in winter time—from headquarters; that the situation was made doubly difficult by the Hudson, which divided the remaining territory in half and which could not be crossed during the winter months between Poughkeepsie, on the north, and Manhattan, on the south.

Keeping Crime Down

They no longer laugh at the troopers, but smile admiringly or grin ruefully, according to the condition of their consciences. For the fifty-eight gray riders are keeping crime down through the entire broken stretch of their territory. If there were more of them undoubtedly their work would be better, for they would be relieved of the tremendous pressure that continues to grow as farmers and small town residents turn to them more and more for aid and protection.

In the two years that they have existed the troopers have rooted deep into the body politic and social of the ten counties through which they ride. They have supplanted almost entirely the be-starred "constabule" of an earlier day, who was always somewhere else when he was needed, and the tobacco chewing deputy who made much of his gun and badge and rarely did anything with either beyond polishing them.

About the big white barracks roll forty acres of meadowland, affording perfect grazing for the mares and colts which are the troopers' joy and pride. Because of its situation and the land at its disposal, Major Chandler has decided that henceforth all horses for all four troops—A at Batavia, D at Oneida, G at Albany and K—are to be bred at Gedney Farms barracks.

The troopers will from now on raise enough horses to meet their needs. Many of the future mounts are now at White Plains—shaggy, long-legged, awkward colts that in time will make splendid horses. Their ancestry bespeaks this, for they are sired by the two great stallions that the American Jockey Club has given to Troop K in the hope that the breed of horses in this section of the country may be improved—Oyama and Pharaoh, race horses in their time and of distinguished ancestry.

Besides horses, the men of Troop K have five Ford cars and two motorcycles, upon which a great amount of their patroling is done. All repairs to these are made by the troopers themselves. Since its inception, Troop K has never had an auto repair bill.

The mounted men hammer out each month about 5,000 miles on patrol. By auto from 5,000 to 10,000 miles of road is covered in the same time. Arrests and convictions a month are now numbered by the hundred, where once they were counted by the score. People have learned that the troopers will go anywhere, at any time, to make an arrest. Even the local police and deputy sheriffs have learned this, and on occasion where there is more danger than glory ahead phone frantically for the gray horsemen.

A Hurry Call

To Sergeant Broadfield, patroling through Northern Westchester by auto, came a hurry call from a deputy sheriff in South Salem, where an otherwise respectable citizen had gone crazy with drink, had chopped up his family with a large axe and was announcing his intention of decapitating the entire community.

The deputy explained that he'd just as soon arrest him, but he thought it would be more official-like if a trooper did it, and besides he was pretty busy. Broadfield turned the prow of his car toward South Salem and on the outskirts of the town met the axeman staggering along with his weapon on his shoulder and an ugly gleam in his eye.

Broadfield waved gaily and called his name, stopped his car abreast of the madman and held out his hand with a pleasant grin. The man took it.

Broad of shoulder and strong of arm is the sergeant. He jerked, and the terrified of deputies landed athwart the top of the Ford door with a jolt that knocked the wind out of him. The axe flew away and the methodical Broadfield, after hauling his prisoner in by the slack of his breeches, took him to the lockup.

Other things besides calls for help come to the barracks of Troop K as testimony of the love that the law-abiding have come to feel for the boyish troopers. Loads of apples from orchards from which the riders have driven thieves; deer from the preserves of men who have grown to know the value of troopers; jellies and other rural expressions of admiration.

Farmhouses welcome them. Men, women and children hail them on the road with grins of friendship. Back of the trust and feeling of security that the troopers impart to the most isolated district there is growing up a genuine affection for the men in the service that is perhaps the greatest tribute that could be paid them.

This takes many forms of expression, even the conventional one of poesy. Recently there came to barracks a lengthy pastoral from the pen of a spinster of Peekskill, addressed to the State Troopers—not to any specific one, mind you. One verse is probably enough:

"As brave and gallant as a knight
Of bold romance he passes;
His horse's hoofs make music light
Upon the wayside grasses.
Clear hazel are his fearless eyes,
Twin pools of love and laughter;
I watch him o'er the distant rise,
And, oh! my heart goes after!"

There are other verses, and every trooper in the outfit wants to tell the world that he is not their inspiration.

These are the men that the radical press insist on hailing as "Black Cossacks."